

Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers

Volume 28 | Issue 3

Article 5

7-1-2011

Composition and Christology

Brian Leftow

Follow this and additional works at: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy>

Recommended Citation

Leftow, Brian (2011) "Composition and Christology," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*: Vol. 28 : Iss. 3 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy/vol28/iss3/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers by an authorized editor of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange.

COMPOSITION AND CHRISTOLOGY

Brian Leftow

One central claim of orthodox Christianity is that in Jesus of Nazareth, God became man. On Chalcedonian orthodoxy, this involves one person, God the Son, having two natures, divine and human. If He does, one person has two properties, deity and humanity. But the Incarnation also involves concrete objects, God the Son (GS), Jesus's human body (B) and—I will assume—Jesus's human soul (S). If God becomes human, GS, B and S somehow become one thing. It would be good to have a metaphysical account of their oneness. I have suggested one. Thomas Senor has criticized my suggestion. I now reply to his case.

One central claim of orthodox Christianity is that in Jesus of Nazareth, God became man. On Chalcedonian orthodoxy, this involves one person, God the Son, having two natures, divine and human. If He does, one person has two properties, deity and humanity. But the Incarnation also involves concrete objects, God the Son (GS), Jesus's human body (B) and—I will assume—Jesus's human soul (S).¹ If God becomes human, GS, B and S somehow become one thing. It would be good to have a metaphysical account of their oneness. I have suggested one.² Thomas Senor has criticized my suggestion.³ I now reply to his case. I begin by explaining my view.

Composition and Hypostatic Union

GS is incarnate only if GS, B and S come to form one thing, and the relations between GS and the composite B + S are so intimate that GS comes to be human by bearing them. I argue elsewhere that GS is not identical with B or B + S, that neither came to constitute Him, and that neither became

¹Nothing turns on this; one could still hold a compositional Christology given only GS and B.

²See Brian Leftow, "A Timeless God Incarnate," in *The Incarnation*, ed. Stephen Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 273–299. Other compositional accounts are possible, on which B, S or B + S become part of GS. The first and third imply that GS, an immaterial divine Person, becomes a partly material object. For reasons to reject that sort of compositional account, see my "Against Materialist Christology," in *Reason and Christian Belief*, ed. Colin Ruloff and Gerald O'Collins (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, forthcoming). The last objection raised there applies also to the proposal to take just S as part of GS.

³Thomas Senor, "The Compositional Account of the Incarnation," *Faith and Philosophy* 24 (2007): 52–71.



part of Him.⁴ If these arguments are correct, then in the Incarnation there came to be a composite including GS, B and S. For if GS neither were, were constituted by, included nor formed a composite including B and S, there would be no one concrete thing GS, B and S made up. But a man is one concrete thing, made up from other things. So there would be no man who was GS incarnate. GS would be a discarnate deity using a human endowment, not one made human by it. My particular compositional model is that GS, B and S came to compose one thing, but neither B nor S became part of GS.

Traditional Christology calls whatever relation(s) render GS incarnate in B + S hypostatic union. Compositional models of the Incarnation raise the question of how composition and hypostatic union are related. The answer may differ depending on whether composition is restricted: that is, whether only some pluralities of items are such that some one further item has all and only them as parts. If composition is restricted, then on my account hypostatic union accounts for the fact that there is a composite GS + B + S; hypostatic union is a form of composition or a relation on which composition supervenes. Plausibly, if composition is restricted, it is not merely contingently restricted. If we assume this, then on my account, if composition is restricted,

- (1) Necessarily (GS is incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth \equiv there is a composite GS + B + S \equiv hypostatic union links GS, B and S).

If hypostatic union is a form of composition, rather than a relation that explains composition, we can assert not just (1), but that my compositional account states an abstract aspect of what it is for GS to be incarnate—that it tells us a bit of what hypostatic union *is*.

On the other hand, perhaps composition is unrestricted: that is, perhaps all pluralities of items compose something. If composition is unrestricted, GS, B and S would compose something even if GS were not incarnate: there would be a composite GS + B + S given only that GS, B and S exist. So if composition is unrestricted, on the plausible assumption that it is not contingently unrestricted, we may not have (1). We have that necessarily (GS is incarnate as Jesus \equiv hypostatic union links GS, B and S). But we may also have that possibly GS, B and S form a composite but GS is not incarnate.

If composition is unrestricted, perhaps hypostatic union is not a form of composition. Perhaps there is a composite GS + B + S just by mereological summation, and hypostatic union only determines what *kind* of composite it is. Even if this is how things are, it will be the case that the Incarnation occurs only if there is a composite GS + B + S, and I maintain that my model gives the proper picture of the composite.⁵ But whether a relation effects composition among a particular set of items does not

⁴Leftow, "Against Materialist Christology."

⁵As vs. models that might see B, S or B + S becoming part of GS.

depend on extrinsic facts about whether and how other things are composed. It is a matter of the nature of the relation itself. Whether composition is restricted has no effect on the nature of hypostatic union. So it seems plausible that

((Composition is restricted) and (hypostatic union is a form of or a supervenience base for composition)) > ((Composition is unrestricted) > (hypostatic union is a form of or a supervenience base for composition)).

If composition is in fact unrestricted, and (as I've supposed) whether it is restricted is a necessary matter, this is a counterpossible. It is thus true for at least trivial semantic reasons. But there is nothing unusual in also attaching substantive significance to certain counterpossibles in philosophical argument. If composition is in fact restricted, then I don't need this claim and so needn't worry about its truth-value.

I see nothing particularly difficult in the claim that even if composition is unrestricted, hypostatic union is a form of or a supervenience-base for composition. In fact, if it is necessary that composition is unrestricted, then on one weak account of supervenience, *every* relation is one on which composition supervenes, since necessarily, for any items *xy* standing in some relation, it is also the case that just *xy* compose a whole. But even if composition is unrestricted, hypostatic union could not just weakly subvene composition in this way, but ground or explain it, or just be a form of composition. On the traditional picture, the Incarnation began at Jesus's conception. Prior to this, one can well hold, *B* and *S* did not exist. So one can well hold that at Jesus's conception, *GS*, *B* and *S* came to be related both by mereological summation and by hypostatic union, and that each, on its own, would suffice to explain their forming a whole. Effects can be overdetermined; why not composition? Even if composition is unrestricted, there is still a distinction to be made between mere sums (like that of your nose and Alpha Centauri) and (say) biological organisms. Intuitively, organisms are "tighter" unities. It is not unreasonable to infer that a less universal composition-relation unites an organism's parts—and so too then *GS*, *B* and *S*. If hypostatic union effects composition even if composition is unrestricted, then even if composition is unrestricted, my account does not just model the relation of *GS*, *B* and *S*. For then the Incarnation occurs *because* there comes to be a composition-effecting relation between *GS*, *B* and *S*, and again, it may be that my account reveals an abstract aspect of what it is for there to be an incarnate deity.

Platonic Dualism and the Incarnation

Let's approach the Incarnation by way of an analogy. For ease of exposition I assume that composition is restricted; it should be clear how to transform the story if it is not. Suppose then that Platonic dualism is true: I do not have a soul. Instead I am a soul. I am also a human being, because I am embodied in a human body. Perhaps even if unembodied I would be a human soul, but if I pre-existed my body that could at most mean I'm

the sort of soul naturally fit only to be human if embodied, and if I am a human soul after my body dies the most else this could mean would be that I am a soul who was once an embodied human, and somehow the property of being human “stuck.” If this is so, I am human only if there is or was a composite, BL plus a body, B*. B* and I are one thing *somehow*. If I am an immaterial soul, B* is not me, nor does B* constitute me, nor do I include B*, and so (as above) what’s left to make sense of our being one thing is that I and B* make up some sort of composite, however loosely united its parts. Some have denied this account of Platonic dualism. Aquinas, for one, took Platonic dualism to include the view that soul is to body as, e.g., sailor is to ship, and so denied that on it, soul and body are genuinely a composite and genuinely make up something as “unified” as a human being ought to be.⁶ But there is a lot of contentious metaphysics behind both denials. Many would allow that causal systems as loosely united as a sailor and a ship are single composite things, and it is to me unclear just how one might determine the right “degree of unity” for a human being to have. And in any case, a Platonic dualist might well deny Aquinas’s analogy.

Suppose now that, as many dualists have thought, souls are as such immortal. Then if I died, a Platonic dualist might well say that

(BL) BL died *qua* human but not *qua* soul.

One reading of (BL) runs this way: souls can’t die. When B* dies, BL the immortal soul continues to exist. He just undergoes a change of property. But humans do die, and unless a soul which was once a human being remains a human being, humans do cease to exist (the count of humans in the world reduces, even though the count of things that were once human does not). I am both a soul and a human. If I die, this can’t imply that a soul dies. It can only mean that a human dies. So if I die, this is something I am able to do only because I am not just a soul but also human.

Let’s now look more closely at the underlying metaphysics: at what makes (BL) true when I die. On Platonic dualism, I am now both a soul and a human, a subject of the property humanity. I have that property because I have a body of a particular sort. A soul/human dies because his/her body dies: I die because B* dies. I die only in the sense that B* dies and I go through that process with it. For me to die is for the body having which makes me human to die. For me to have B* as my body, and so be made human, is for certain relations to bind B* and I. On Platonic dualism, as I’ve said, these include composition—they consist in whatever makes B* and I compose something. So what makes (BL) true when I die is this: there is a human, BL, who is human because relations between BL and B* make them compose and include their composing BL + B*. B* dies. BL does not. Perhaps B* ceases to exist, leaving only remains, or perhaps B* still exists but is no longer BL’s body. Either way it is plausible that BL’s dying

⁶So e.g., SCG II, 57.

included BL + B*'s ceasing to exist. (BL) does not wear the involvement of composition on its sleeve. All the same, BL's dying consists in B*'s dying and BL + B*'s ceasing to exist, and this is so because relations between BL and B* make them compose and include their composing BL + B*. (BL)'s underlying metaphysics is partly mereological, though (BL)'s form does not reveal this.

Christologists typically say things like

(2) Jesus Christ died *qua* human but not *qua* divine.⁷

I read (2) largely as I just read (BL). Jesus Christ = GS.⁸ Divine beings are as such eternal. They cannot cease to exist. Not being biological, they can't die. So GS was able to die only because in addition to being divine He was human. A divine being can die only by having a body which dies and perhaps having a soul and body separate. As to the underlying metaphysics, GS had acquired a human body and soul. The body died. So His biological life ceased, though He continued to exist. His human soul went its separate way—and all that constituted His dying. This is all His dying *could* amount to. There is a deity, GS, who is human because relations between GS and B + S make them compose and include their composing GS + B + S. B dies. GS does not. In the Incarnation, a deity dies because the human body composed with Him dies. Plausibly there then ceases to be a composite GS + B + S. But there remains part of it, GS + S. S is a human-type soul. So plausibly GS remains incarnate even while He lacks a human body, and plausibly since the soul which is then the sole vehicle of the incarnation is human-type, GS remains human or else is as close to human as any of us is (or as what is left of us is) when the like occurs to us. GS's dying consists in B's dying and GS + B + S's ceasing to exist, and this is so because relations between GS and B + S make them compose and include their composing GS + B + S. (2)'s underlying metaphysics is partly mereological, though (2)'s form does not reveal this.

Does Composition Help?

Christology has sought to use *qua*-statements to deal with puzzles the Incarnation generates. Senor has more than one idea about what my mereological reading of "*qua*" is supposed to do. He thinks I mean it to give "a way of understanding the metaphysics of the incarnation that blocks the inference from 'S *qua* N is P' to 'S is P.'"⁹ Consider the claim that

Jesus Christ is of limited power *qua* human but not *qua* divine.

The relevant inferences would be

⁷Senor consistently uses such locutions as "*qua* His human nature" and "*qua* His divine nature" (e.g., "The Compositional Account," 56). This isn't how the tradition speaks.

⁸Using "Jesus Christ" as a name for GS is a terminological shift; in "A Timeless God Incarnate," I called the composite GS + B + S Jesus Christ. I explain the shift below.

⁹Senor, "The Compositional Account," 53.

Jesus Christ is of limited power *qua* human. So

Jesus Christ is of limited power.

Jesus Christ is not of limited power *qua* divine. So

Jesus Christ is not of limited power.

It would make these inferences problematic if they yield that Jesus Christ is and is not of limited power—and this is (as it seems) a contradiction. Now actually, a mereological Christology could just grant these inferences and de-fang the appearance of contradiction. We have a composite, GS + B + S, and due to the Incarnation, both the powers proper to GS and the powers proper to B + S belong to GS. GS is not of limited power in and of Himself. By composition with B + S He acquires the use of a limited set of powers, at least some of them redundant. (At least some things B + S is naturally empowered to do GS can already do, e.g., think. But perhaps there are things B + S is naturally empowered to do that GS cannot already do, e.g., walk.) B + S's powers are GS's extrinsic powers, powers He has due to relations to something outside Himself, so GS has at His disposal a limited extrinsic as well as an unlimited intrinsic set of powers. The powers reside in distinct parts of the composite, and so there is no contradiction in its containing both; GS has the powers in two different ways (intrinsically and extrinsically) owing to the makeup of G + B + S, and so there is no contradiction in His possessing both.

However, a mereological Christology can also block the inference. This inference fails because properties of parts need not become properties of other parts of the same whole: part of the wall weighs a ton, but another part may weigh less, and though GS forms a composite with something possessing only limited power (B + S), it does not follow that GS thereby ceases to be omnipotent. Rather, B + S has intrinsically only limited powers, and if GS limits Himself to using just B + S's natural powers, GS will act solely out of a limited set of powers, though remaining intrinsically omnipotent.

Senor seems to concede that "*qua*" read mereologically manages to block the inference; he nowhere claims that the inference goes through despite it. But he also writes that

Whether [the composite GS + B + S] borrows (a) divine . . . or (a) human property will not be resolved by the use of reduplicative sentences. Yet this is precisely where . . . the *qua*-move was supposed to be useful.¹⁰

I have not supposed that it is useful for this. It could not be. If the composite is F *qua* human, i.e., in virtue of including as a part a natural human endowment, it will typically be true that a divine being as such is not F: thus if the composite is mortal *qua* human, it is also true that a divine being as such is immortal. Since the composite has a divine being as a part, it will

¹⁰Ibid., 66.

be just as true that it is not F *qua* divine as that it is F *qua* human. Since both *qua*-statements are true, they have equal claim, just as *qua*-statements, to transfer their predicate to the whole composite. (This is a minimal thesis, which does not imply that either *does* have such a claim.) The mereological reading doesn't discriminate between them and so can't adjudicate between them. If the composite is omnipotent *qua* divine (i.e., contains a divine part which is omnipotent) and non-omnipotent *qua* human (i.e., contains a natural human endowment which is not), omnipotence and non-omnipotence can't both transfer to the whole. All the mereological reading tells us is that if either property transfers, it does so *inter alia* because part of the whole has the property primarily. I nowhere claim that it explains why properties transfer (thereby giving us a way to judge which ones will do so).

Senor also writes that if "these property pairs will have to be worked out one at a time . . . the *qua* move does not, in fact, give us any general help in resolving the logical difficulties of the incarnation."¹¹ This seems wrong to me. The mereological reading leaves it that the pairs must be worked out one at a time because it blocks the move from "*S qua* N is P" to "*S* is P." Blocking this is enough on its own to meet the only logical difficulty Senor raises for the doctrine of the Incarnation, that it seems that for many properties F, humans are as such F and a deity is as such $\neg F$, so that if something is both divine and human, it will follow that it is F and $\neg F$.¹²

Half and Half

I allow that the composite might have as parts a deity which is F and a body-soul composite which is not, but borrow neither property. I offer this analogy:

Consider a sphere whose surface is half-white, half-black: it has a white part and a black part, and neither 'white' nor 'black' applies to it *as a whole*, for the way we use color-words requires [something like] that a thing be called [say] black only if the majority of its surface is black.

Senor claims that this offends against (what he dubs) the law of excluded middle for properties: "for every object O and . . . property P, either O exemplifies P or O does not exemplify P."¹³ I say: no foul. Black and white are contraries, not contradictories. Every uniform color or color-pattern is a contrary to both. The sphere does not exemplify black and does not exemplify white, but exemplifies a third property, half-white-and-half-black. Senor is wrong that for me in this case "being black . . . does apply to some degree."¹⁴ I think it applies fully to the part and not at all to the whole.

¹¹Ibid., 66.

¹²Ibid., 52.

¹³Ibid., 68.

¹⁴Ibid.

An Impersonal Christ?

On my approach, B and S do not become parts of GS. They do become parts of GS + B + S. Senor notes that if this is so, $GS \neq GS + B + S$. He then infers that

Either there are two persons in the incarnation [GS and GS + B + S] or [GS + B + S] is not a person . . . if [GS + B + S] is not a person, there is no person who is God Incarnate. The doctrine of the Incarnation is supposed to (imply) that God knows our condition because God the Son was one of us. The compositional account . . . denies this . . . it substitutes for a personal God Incarnate . . . an impersonal conglomerate.¹⁵

This seems to me to go astray. $GS \neq GS + B + S$: there are times at which both exist and the latter includes parts GS doesn't. But consider an analogy from Aquinas¹⁶ which is fully compatible with the mereological approach: GS is to B + S as soul is to body in ordinary dualism. To make the analogy closer, suppose (as Aquinas does not) that I am a soul.¹⁷ Then once I have a body, B*, there are two things, BL and a composite, BL + B*, which is Embodied BL. Embodied BL includes parts BL doesn't. So Embodied BL \neq BL. Is Embodied BL an "impersonal conglomerate"? I act in the world through B*. When I do, in one sense, I alone act. But in another, I and B* act together—B* is my instrument, and the instrument makes a distinctive causal contribution to the result. I saw wood, but in another sense I and the saw must act together, since I lack the sharpness and stiffness the job requires. This would still be true were there something I and the saw compose (imagine the saw grafted onto me, say). So if I and the saw compose something, I act, but that composite also acts as a whole, by my initiating intention and the saw's implementing powers. So too *a fortiori* the composite BL + B*. It can indeed act as a whole. If I run into you, I strike you with its weight, having none of my own strictly speaking, and I strike you with my agency and moral responsibility, since I direct the composite's path. Because of this, you can have personal relations with an embodied person—the whole thing, not just the person embodied. Not every part of the composite is what you intend to have personal relations with (you want to have them with me, not my body) but in the same way, if I am just a live body, not every part of that composite is what you intend to have personal relations with (you want to have them with me, not my big toe), and yet it is true that you have them with the whole composite. B* is my instrument for dealing with you, as the saw is my instrument for cutting; in the same sense in which you might be cut by BL + saw, if there were such a thing, you might be addressed by or find compassion in BL + B*. In dealing with BL + B* you deal with a person, precisely in virtue of his distinctively personal attributes. So it seems a stretch to

¹⁵Ibid., 55–6.

¹⁶SCG IV, 41.

¹⁷A referee suggested the soul-body analogy. I develop it my own way.

call BL + B* impersonal. For BL + B* is just a human being, understood as Platonism understands him, together with the natural endowment (B*) which makes him count as human.

Being personal is not quite the same thing as being a person—as is often said in discussing God or the Trinitarian Persons. No person is identical with BL + B*: I am not, since we are assuming Platonic dualism and so BL + B* contains a part I do not, and certainly BL + B* is no-one else. But as President Clinton reminded us, “is” can express many things. In one looser sense of “is,” BL + B* is me, and there is a person who “is” BL + B*: I’m its dominant part, speaking for it, initiating its actions, being the person you deal with in dealing with it. BL + B* “is” me because the rest of BL + B* doesn’t matter to the question of with whom you have to do. The only way you can speak to me is for me to don a body. The body lets you confront me. When you confront BL + B*, you confront *me*: in the same looser sense, BL + B* is me. Why not the same, then, for GS and GS + B + S?¹⁸

I now turn to the question of whether GS if only composed with B + S “knows our condition.” On my account, GS had a body but was not identical with it, as with us. GS’s life animated it. His intentions made it move. He felt sensations originating in it. He suffered due to damage in it. He died because it did. He had a soul but was not identical with it, as with us. His thoughts coursed through a human mind implemented in that body and that soul. In short, GS owned a full human natural endowment, and it affected Him as ours do us. In this sense, GS “knew our condition” on my model.

There is also a fuller sense one might give to “knowing our condition.” In this sense no account of how GS, B and S relate answers the question of whether He “knew our condition,” and the only relevant point to make is whether an account of this is compatible with His knowing our condition. For instance, one way to hold that incarnate GS is *radically* one of us is to hold that materialism is true of us and somehow, in the incarnation, it comes to be the case that GS = B. Even if GS was physical like us, though, it does not follow that He completely “knew our condition.” One could hold both that GS = B and that GS on earth was not “one of us” in this fuller sense because He had a life-experience radically unlike ours: perhaps including uninterrupted communion with the other Persons, full ability to draw on their knowledge (even if He can’t physically store its full extent in His brain) and full ability to tap their omnipotence (and so a kind of

¹⁸All this has responded to Senor in the terms his criticism presupposes—that either GS + B + S is the personal thing in the Incarnation or there is no personal thing there. There is also a simpler answer to Senor’s worry that “there is no person who is God Incarnate,” which is actually my “official” answer: even on my model, there is, and it is GS. But this in the dialectical context isn’t quite fair. Senor poses the problem as he does because he was misled by my earlier piece’s bad choice of terminology: I used “Jesus Christ” as a name for GS + B + S, and that made it sound as if I meant GS + B + S to be the person in the Incarnation. Given my misuse of “Jesus Christ,” Senor’s argument is perfectly reasonable, and so I have in fairness replied to it on its own terms.

derivative omnipotence founded not in the powers of His body but in His unique relations to the other Persons). Hold my view, on the other hand, and one could easily also hold that GS “knew our condition” in the present fuller sense. One can hold that GS lived under B and S’s limitations, e.g., had access prior to the Resurrection only to knowledge He could have through the purely natural use of these, in causal dependence only on both and the physical environment, and prior to the Resurrection had the use only of powers naturally inherent in any composite of B + S’s kind. It is open to me to say that He used B + S only as we use our natural endowments and drew on no distinctively divine resources while on earth. If all this is compatible with it, I don’t see how my account could imply that GS didn’t know our condition in this fuller sense and so “wasn’t one of us” in the fullest way.

Senor might query the *sense* in which GS owned a human natural endowment: He was not identical with it, and its parts were not His. He might claim that B and S are more like artificial grippers tacked onto an ordinary human body than like limbs grafted into it,¹⁹ and so claim that the ownership relation here is insufficiently intimate to qualify GS as “one of us” *via* incarnation. But on any version of dualism, the soul is not identical with the body, nor are body-parts parts of the soul, and yet the soul-body connection is more intimate than that between a body and an artificial gripper. On Cartesian forms of dualism, this ownership consists in there being certain exclusive causal relations between soul and body: the soul’s basic actions are implemented only in this body, through which the soul thus has all its impact on the world, and similarly the world can have no impact on the soul unless it is mediated through this body.²⁰ Thus it would suffice for Cartesian ownership were some basic actions of GS implemented only in B + S and none implemented in any other material thing and were there some ways the world could have impact on GS only through B + S and no ways it could affect GS through any other material thing. On standard Western theism, the last condition is trivially met, since the world affects God at most by causing some of His cognitive states to be as they are, and each part of the world does this directly and immediately, not through any other part of the world. Strongly kenotic Christologies might say more—that for the duration of the Incarnation, or perhaps its earthly phase, all of GS’s basic actions were implemented only in B + S and the world affected GS only through B + S.

Pre-Cartesian dualisms add to the foregoing that a particular body is the body of a particular soul because that soul animates that body. In the Incarnation, GS brings about some relation between events in S + B and His own existence such that these events count as part of that existence. Perhaps

¹⁹Senor, “The Compositional Account,” 57–59.

²⁰For one such account of embodiment, see Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 104–105; *The Evolution of the Soul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 146–152; and *The Christian God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 56–60.

this is enough to sustain the animation claim. If not, we can add that while the life in B consists in ordinary biological processes, these processes are not just divinely sustained in the ordinary way: rather, they have a special relation to GS's causal activity. Perhaps GS renders their connection to His causation involuntary (as the "animating" soul-to-body connection was thought to be). Perhaps whatever a pre-Cartesian soul does for its body in animating it, He does directly. On the other hand, He might well animate B *through* S, so that S is the proximate and He the more remote cause of this. What we make of this would depend, of course, on just how GS relates to S. However we parse the GS-B relation, if a soul animates a body, incorporation of a part into that body's ongoing life makes the soul "own" it in the most intimate way a soul can. So too, if GS animates B, incorporation of a material part into B's ongoing life makes GS "own" it in the most intimate way. As to GS's relation to S, if I can hold that GS brings it about that GS alone is the person whose soul S is—i.e., if I can avoid Nestorianism—I can hold that any of S's operations are automatically ascribed to GS, just as any of my soul's operations are automatically ascribed to me.

If we keep the identity relation classical, there seem to be the following main ways to relate GS, B and S in the Incarnation:

- (3) $GS = B$,
- (4) $GS = S$,
- (5) $GS = B + S$,
- (6) $GS \neq B$, but B constitutes GS,
- (7) $GS \neq S$, but S constitutes GS,
- (8) $GS \neq B + S$, but B + S constitutes GS,
- (9) B + S became part of GS, or
- (10) GS, B and S came to compose one thing, but B + S did not become part of GS.

Let's distinguish (a) and (b) versions of (6)–(8): the (a) versions involve a theory of constitution on which it is a relation between wholly distinct entities, and the (b) versions a theory of constitution on which constituting and constituted entities are temporarily, contingently or relatively identical.²¹ I argue against (3), (5), (9), and the (b) versions elsewhere.²² On (10) and the (a) versions, there will be causal and other relations between B, S and GS in virtue of which they make up a whole. They are the same relations on any of these. The alternatives differ only in their metaphysical reading of the consequences of these relations' obtaining. If the truth is one of these, these relations suffice to make GS one of us on the true ac-

²¹For details see *Material Constitution*, ed. Michael Rea (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997).

²²Leftow, "Against Materialist Christology."

count. But if they do, they would on the rest, since they are the same relations. So they would on (10), one version of which is my view. As to (4), here the causal and other relations are just those between GS and B; GS takes over S's role. The relations are as like those in (10) or the (a) versions as this simplification permits. So it is likely that if (4) is the true account, and (4)'s relations are enough to make GS one of us, the relations in (10) are also enough. After all, (10) and (4) differ only by the inclusion of a further part.

Persons and Parts

There is however one point I must concede to Senor.²³ I had argued that my view avoids Nestorianism (the heresy one would have if B + S, by themselves, constituted a person distinct from GS) by appeal to the claims that persons don't have persons as parts and B + S is part of GS + B + S. This treated GS + B + S as a person. Though I have argued that GS + B + S is *personal*, there is no person with which it is identical. So I cannot use this move. I slipped up because in the paper to which Senor responds, I needed a term to refer to what I have been calling GS + B + S, and had the bright idea of using "Jesus Christ," a personal name. This let me fool myself. I've switched to "GS + B + S" here because it does not appear to be a personal name. If we reserve "Jesus Christ" for GS, we wind up saying that Jesus Christ is the sole person in GS + B + S. But of course: there is GS and there is B + S, the two together compose GS + B + S, and only one of them is a person.

Having conceded to Senor here, I need another way to avoid Nestorianism. I provide more than one elsewhere.²⁴ I also need a second mereological reading of the Christological "*qua*": the one I gave in the original paper applies only to GS + B + S. If composition with B + S is enough to qualify GS as human, we can assert (2) and analyze it as I do above. As noted, the position thus clarified can still block contradiction: properties of other parts of wholes including A need not transfer to A. But some such properties do transfer: because my right hand is in the water, my right hand is a proper part of something with a proper part in the water, and therefore my left hand is also a proper part of something with a proper part in the water. There is still the same need to work out case by case what does transfer and why.

I took up the mereological account to explain how a timeless GS could remain so and yet be incarnate in a temporal B + S. My earlier account of this turns out to need no alteration save substituting "GS + B + S" at appropriate places; so too its treatment of GS's being and B + S's not being omnipotent. I have already given my account of (2). I have also discussed elsewhere the claim that

GS + B + S is uncreated *qua* God but *qua* man is created.

²³Senor, "The Compositional Account," 56.

²⁴Brian Leftow, "The Humanity of God," in *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, ed. Anna Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 20–24.

I now add that

Jesus Christ is uncreated *qua* God but *qua* man is created

should be read this way: Jesus Christ is GS, who is divine by His own individual essence. So what He is *qua* God, He is *simpliciter*. Thus GS is uncreated, period. Even if He is a man, it cannot be true that the man He is is created, for the man He is is GS. GS is human by composition with B + S, i.e., by having a human natural endowment. B + S is created, period. (11) can assert only that GS is part of a whole with a created part, and thereby has a property, being human, His possession of which depends on a created thing. He is created *qua* man only in the sense that something created makes Him a man, and so a divine act of creation makes Him a man. Finally, I also discussed

(11) GS + B + S *qua* God is impeccable but *qua* man was tempted.

That treatment stands, but I add that we should read

Jesus Christ *qua* God is impeccable but *qua* man was tempted

as that GS is simply impeccable, but the attribute of being tempted transfers. This just summarizes things I said originally. So when I use "Jesus Christ" as I should, as a personal name, what I said previously does not alter, but I must add a bit to it.²⁵

University of Oxford

²⁵My thanks to the editor, referees and Joseph Jedwab for comments.